

PHOTOGRAPHY/ BRUCE HILLS

Alas, the sentimental journey confronted barbed defiance at this juncture, where the fence forced a grudging detour.

'Express' mail told a twisted tale

■ Third in a series

By Bruce Hills
Deseret News staff writer

In eastern Nevada, the Pony Express trail is marked only sporadically by signs, so you don't always know if you are actually on the right track — especially when you come to a fork in the road and must decide on one of two or even three roads.

Steve Banks and I were traveling by pickup truck, pulling a dune buggy, west from Salt Lake City on the Pony Express route. Not infrequently, we would take the most likely looking road from the fork and drive 10 to 20 miles before coming to a dead end. He and I finally learned to pick the worst looking road. Generally, it turned out to be the Pony Express trail.

The road in eastern Nevada is rough, rocky in spots, ankle-deep in dust in places, wet and muddy on occasion and narrow and twisting. In many places the road is a river or creek bed. We wonder what the road would be like in a long, hard rain. Luckily, we had dry weather for most of our trip.

We were not able to drive on some of the trail in central Nevada because it is so bad in places it simply does not exist. However, the trail meets U.S. 50 in several places and either follows U.S. 50 or is close to it for many miles in central and western Nevada.

As you travel westward through eastern Nevada you occasionally see small concrete markers or wooden signs beside the road designating the trail as the Pony Express route, but these signs are many miles apart and there are few, if any, other signs to tell you where you are.

There are no signs or monuments marking the station sites in eastern



Nevada, so you must depend on maps and your odometer to tell you where you are. If signs were ever put up, they have been vandalized.

On several Pony Express maps published by the Bureau of Land Management and the state of Nevada, the stations are marked on the map, but there are few remains of any of the stations left in Nevada.

The only Nevada station that is intact is a re-creation of the Ruby Valley Station that has been moved to Elko, Nev., some 50 miles north of the Pony Express trail. It stands in front of the Northern Nevada Museum in Elko.

Along the eastern Nevada trail, most of the station ruins that still exist are on private land some distance from the trail so you cannot see them from the trail. One of the few vestiges of the 1860s is a cemetery called the Fort Pierce Cemetery. This can be easily seen from the trail.

The cemetery consists of four graves marked with wooden monuments and surrounded by wooden fences. Historians believe one of the graves may contain the remains of a Pony Express rider killed in the line of duty.

The Pony Express maps Steve and I saw showed only a few modern cit-

ies and few modern highways. The modern highway maps do not mark the Pony Express trail — so you look from one map to another through eastern Nevada trying to find out where you are.

Steve and I were able to drive nearly 150 miles through eastern Nevada on the trail before we had to detour at a place where barbed wire fences have been erected and a swift, deep creek crosses. In this area, the trail has turned into farm pastures.

We headed south from that point about 40 miles to U.S. 50 and then west to Eureka. From there we skirted the Pony Express route for approximately 40 miles, linking up with it again near Austin. From there the trail moves close to or onto U.S. 50 for more than 80 miles.

At Sand Springs Station site (whose stone foundations have been excavated), the Pony Express heads westward over what were two dry lakes in 1860 and 1861. The lakes are full of water today, and even those Nevadans who have tried to ride horseback over the route there, past Carson Lake, have had difficulty.

One rider, Paul Saralegui, 28, who manages the Cold Springs Station, a gas station and restaurant on U.S. 50, said he and a friend tried to ride across the area on horses in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebration when the trail ride was being re-enacted.

"My friend's horse got belly deep in mud, and we both turned our horses back. The Pony Express trail there just doesn't exist any more," Saralegui said.

Steve and I could find no sign or marker on U.S. 50 that tells where the trail crosses the lakes. We continued on north to Fallon and then linked up again with the trail at Fort

Churchill, a state park where the adobe ruins of an Army fort still stand.

There is a museum at Fort Churchill and plaques that tell of a giant lake that once stood on the site, 16,000 years ago. Fort Churchill was built in 1860, and its headquarters building was the stopping point for the Pony Express.

From there, the trail winds along dirt and gravel roads through small towns and along a wide river until it meets a paved highway into Carson City. The trail then continues on U.S. 50 to Jacks Valley Road and then through a valley that reminded us of the Cache Valley, to Genoa, an old Mormon community, and finally up a steep mountain road called Kingsbury Grade to Stateline where, a mile east, Friday's Station once stood.

Today, the only monument to the Pony Express near Stateline is in front of Harrah's Club, a gambling casino.

Up Kingsbury Grade, you can see the original Pony Express trail cut into the mountainside, a narrow, twisting, steep, rocky road that exists only in places because the new road has covered it in many areas.

Al Barber, a circulation driver for the Tahoe Tribune, whom we met on our ride, told us about a landslide in the winter of 1982-1983 that closed the main highway from Carson City to Stateline.

"So the post office trucks took the Kingsbury Grade until the main highway could be cleared and re-opened. The local newspapers made quite a bit about the fact that the mail was taking the old Pony Express route," Barber said, chuckling.

Next: On to Sacramento, Calif.

Utah boxers, Chris Schwenke, winning 'impossible'

well
writer

— Sometimes it's dangerous after dark.

Schwenke discovered that the Forum.

has been forced to move up to division after failing to heavyweight, dropped an decision to beat Tim Los Angeles.

ose, but Schwenke closed rounds and dominated the has, and I've followed his win the fight," said a Los writer as he visited the room following the bout.

nd," said Schwenke, who rounds, I got my second

18-4-1 after beginning his consecutive wins. Two broken his father and no home at made the past year an un-fighter managed by Salt actor John Holmes.

In Salt Lake, the situation is very difficult, if not impossible. "The travel, home has been training here because there are inadequate fighters in Salt Lake."

hat way. Danny "Little Red" Lopez title at the Salt Palace, a ally by ABC Sports. The die News and Jeff Schell- e pairings in the popular n.

board is bare. Why? voters just lost interest," I know much about the fighting in Utah, but I some people too."

crowd was San Jose's Joe

Gagliardi, who promoted a number of fights in Salt Lake City several years ago.

"The big drawback is transportation costs," says Gagliardi, whose fighter on Monday's card was chilled at 2:02 of the first round by Los Angeles' Henry Hearns. "It costs so much to fly in and out of Salt Lake. I can almost fly as cheaply to New York as I can from San Jose to Salt Lake. And when you don't have enough local talent to help put together a card, and you have to fly boxers in, I would need a \$30,000-35,000 gate just to break even." Gagliardi, who also owned the Salt Lake Gulls baseball team for a year, added, "There's nothing wrong with Salt Lake as a sports town."

Holmes disagrees with Gagliardi's assessment that there's no local boxing talent in Salt Lake.

"I have three good fighters myself," he says. "Tony Montoya Jr. has won his first eight fights and he's ready to break out. Middleweight Scott Ochoa is 10-1, and then there's Chris."

"I was in the service when fights were popular in Salt Lake," says Schwenke. "I have fought in Utah only once. It would be nice to be able to fight at home and have people behind you."

Schwenke sported a bump over his left eye and red welts on his right arm following Monday's loss. "My timing wasn't there," said Schwenke, who hadn't fought in eight months. "I didn't try to knock him out, because I needed to go 10 rounds to get ready for my next fight" in the Stroh's cruiserweight elimination tournament at The Forum, a fight which is no longer there.

"He was a little rusty, but I thought he won the fight," said John Holmes. "But I've seen him better."

Holmes and Schwenke are now making plans to return to Las Vegas in hopes of getting a fight — preferably on national cable television — within few weeks.

There's no sense going home.

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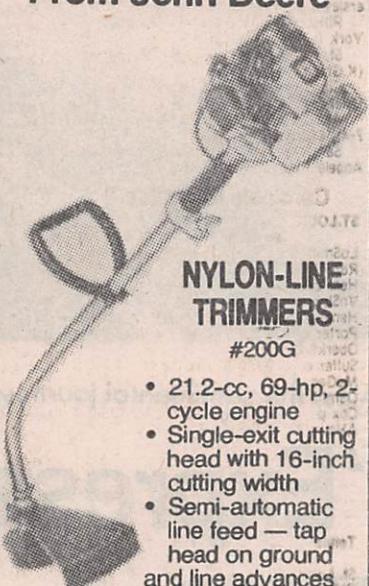
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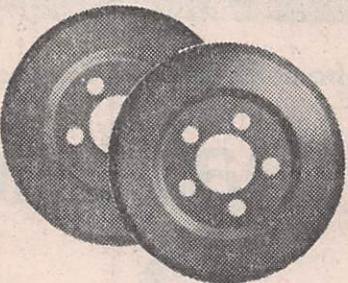
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ers extend ' contract

(AP) — The Hartford Whalers announced they have extended the contracts of head coach Claude Larose, by one year.

for the Whalers in July 1983, two Francis was hired as president and reshape the NHL team.

ed the Salt Lake Golden Eagles for those signed two-year contracts when its now have been extended through season.

lers finished last in the Adams Division last season. But they won nine more previous season, reduced their goals record 403 to 320 and increased their to 288. The Whalers lost only two of and upset the playoff-bound New Quebec Nordiques, Buffalo Sabres and in the final two weeks.

ched the NHL's California Seals and both of which folded. "Security is king," Evans said, remarking that he a fortune cookie that read, "You are a loyalist." That kind of thing sends in this business," Evans said.

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